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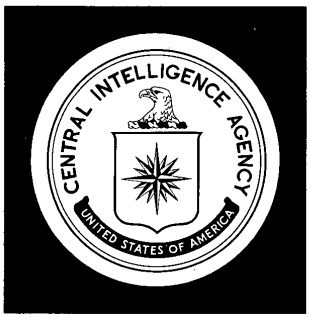

The President's Daily Brief

25X1

29 April 1972

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~~*Top Secret*~~

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

29 April 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

North Vietnamese forces have isolated Quang Tri City. *(Page 1)*

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In West Germany, Chancellor Brandt is determined to go ahead with the Bundestag vote on the Eastern treaties next week. *(Page 5)*

Egyptian President Sadat is receiving domestic criticism of his foreign policies. *(Page 6)*

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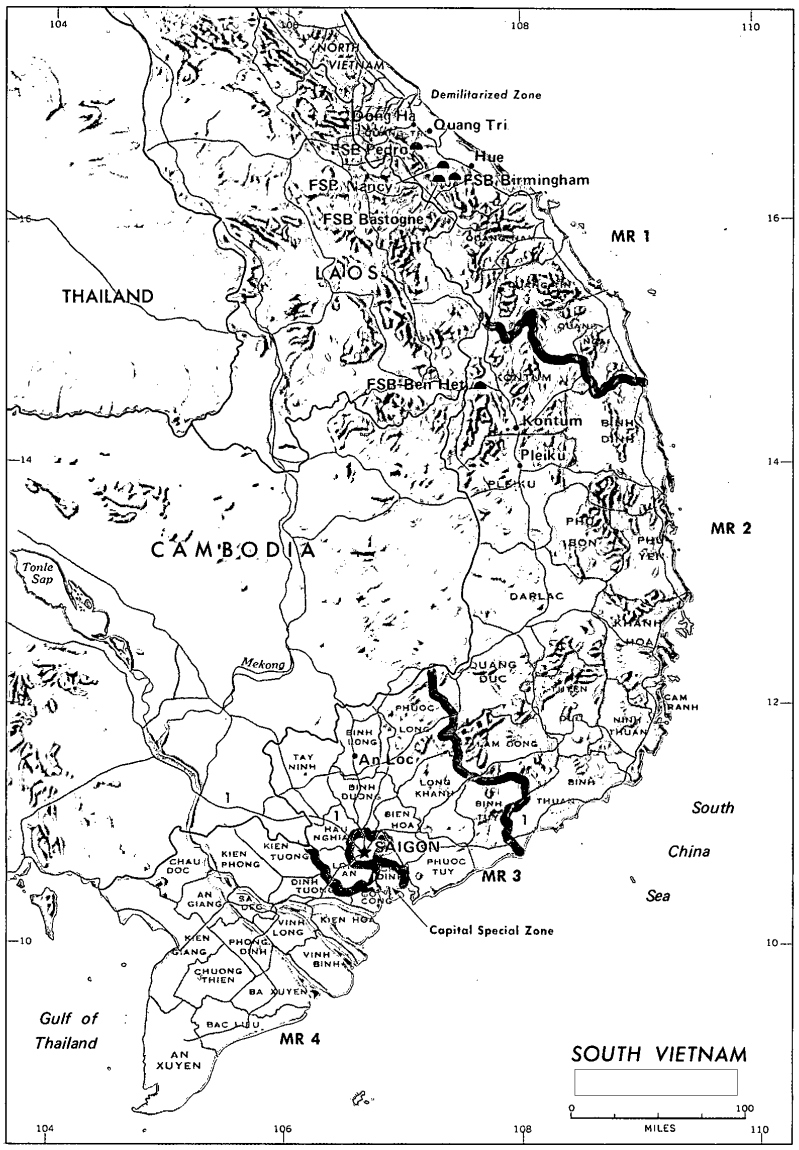

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VIETNAM

Strong elements of two North Vietnamese divisions, spearheaded by tanks and supported by heavy artillery, have isolated Quang Tri City. Some enemy troops are on the edge of the capital. The defense of the city now depends heavily on allied air support which recently has been facilitated by relatively good weather.

Farther south, Fire Support Base Bastogne has been evacuated, and only one other military strongpoint remains between the Communists and Hue. Enemy pressure in this area inhibits any shift of government reinforcements from Hue to Quang Tri.

The enemy evidently hopes to sustain military pressure on the northern front.

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In the central highlands, there has been little enemy-initiated military action. The repositioning of Communist headquarters, the continued evidence of resupply movements, and enemy efforts at road interdiction leave little doubt, however, that a serious test of South Vietnamese defenses north of Kontum City is in the offing.

The Communists may be maneuvering to increase military pressure on the populated sectors surrounding Saigon. Intercepts reveal that preparations are being made for military operations along the Route 1 - Saigon River corridor west of the capital. This corridor has traditionally been a main avenue of enemy approach to Saigon. Communist artillery fire and light ground probes around An Loc during the last few days suggest that the enemy is trying to keep South Vietnamese forces pinned down in the town and along Route 13. Meanwhile, some enemy forces and equipment reportedly are being shifted farther south toward Route 1.

(continued)

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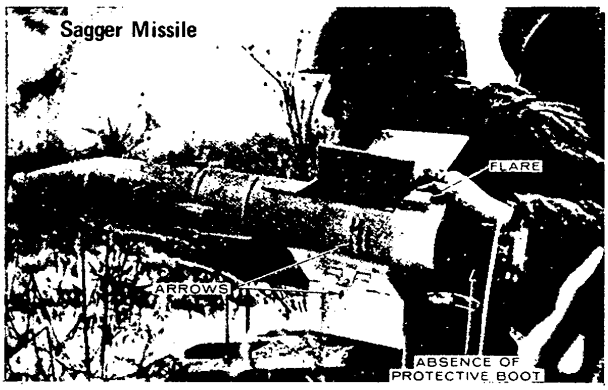

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Enough enemy weapons have been captured since the start of the offensive to indicate that both the Soviets and the Chinese are supplying up-to-date weaponry to Hanoi. Chinese copies of Soviet tanks, recoilless rifles, and grenade launchers are among the arms taken. The Soviet-made wire-guided "Sagger" missile, which is highly effective against armored vehicles and tanks, has been used on all three major battlefronts.

* * *

Communications from the harbor master in Haiphong were renewed on about 24 April. Messages are probably being passed over mobile facilities, since the harbor master communications building was destroyed during the bombing. Two communications outstations of the Directorate of Coastal Shipping resumed normal operations on 19 April.

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VIETNAM

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WEST GERMANY

State Secretary Bahr has told the chiefs of mission of the US, UK, and France that Chancellor Brandt is determined to hold a vote on the Eastern treaties on 3 and 4 May as scheduled, despite the Bundestag's rejection by a tie vote yesterday of part of the budget bill. Bahr said Brandt had rejected a proposal by Christian Democratic leader Barzel to postpone the vote on the treaties for two to three weeks. Barzel subsequently told a US Embassy officer that he still is pressing for such a delay to allow time to elicit new Soviet and East German concessions.

The tie vote in the Bundestag resulted in calls for early elections from both sides of the aisle, but the leadership of both the coalition and the opposition prefers to avoid elections at this time. With the Bundestag adjourned until Tuesday, Brandt is trying to rally the three or four wavering coalition deputies. One Free Democrat who voted for Barzel in the no-confidence motion is believed to support Brandt on the treaties. Another has agreed to resign in favor of a loyal replacement, but has disappeared without handing in his letter of resignation. Brandt hopes that the weekend will bring the beginning of dissension in opposition ranks over Barzel's failure to unseat him.

The government crisis, capping an increasingly bitter debate over the treaties, appears to have sharpened divisions in the electorate. Government leaders are taking their case to the public at a rally today in West Berlin, but they have expressed concern that the normal May Day demonstrations may lead to disturbances.

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EGYPT

An associate of former vice president Muhyeddin has told US officials in Cairo that incumbent Vice President Shafi recently took President Sadat to task for severing diplomatic relations with Jordan, accusing him of acting without prior consultation. Shafi dropped from sight for a week thereafter, but he reappeared after an apparent reconciliation with the President.

The source reported that similar criticism was expressed in a letter to Sadat from ten former cabinet members and retired senior military officers. The letter questioned Sadat's policies and was particularly critical of the President's failure to consult more widely among well-known Egyptians. Two former members of Nasir's Revolutionary Command Council were among the signers of the letter [redacted] 25X1

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This dissatisfaction is symptomatic of widespread unhappiness among Egyptians. Sadat's failure to move the dispute with Israel off dead center is causing growing frustration, and his attempts to divert public attention from the impasse have only tended to confirm the impression that he is merely treading water.

This particular group of malcontents alone has little capability to threaten Sadat. Its members, however, represent potential rallying points. Muhyeddin in particular, who was frequently mentioned as a successor after Nasir's death, is one of the few civilian figures whose name reappears periodically as a possible candidate for the presidency. Any real challenge to Sadat would, of course, require the support of army leaders. Thus far there is no evidence linking them with these dissenters.

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USSR-JORDAN

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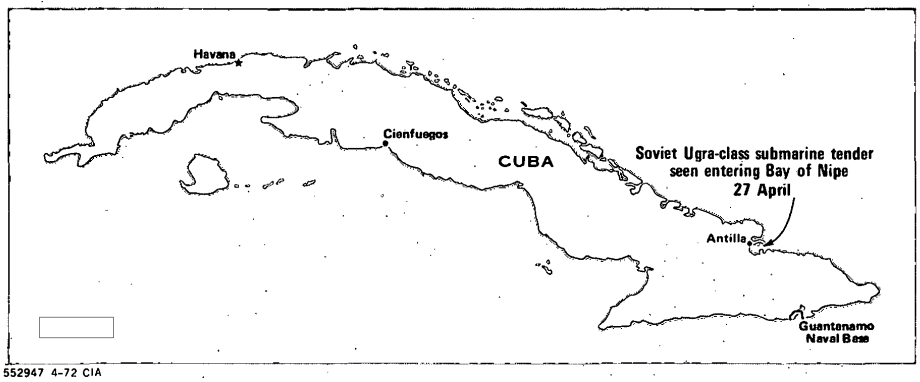

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NOTES

USSR-Syria: [redacted] 25X1

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USSR-Cuba: The Soviet Ugra-class submarine tender that arrived in Cuban waters on Wednesday entered the Bay of Nipe on Thursday. It is the first Ugra from the Black Sea to operate in Cuban waters, although Soviet tenders from the Northern Fleet previously have visited Cuba on several occasions. The Kotlin-class destroyer that has been in Cuba since early March is currently in Antilla and may accompany the sub tender to Havana, possibly in time for May Day ceremonies.

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